

Nadler Hails Expected House Passage of Major Campaign Finance Reform

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), chair of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, hailed the expected and much-anticipated passage of H.R. 5175, the Democracy is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections (DISCLOSE) Act, an essential bill to reform the campaign finance system in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's January 21st decision in Citizens United v. FEC. Nadler spoke in support of the legislation on the House floor.

"Earlier this year, the Supreme Court reversed years of precedent and ruled, irresponsibly, that corporations are people just like you and me and have a constitutional right to pump as much money as they want into our elections," said Nadler. "The very real danger now is that corporations, some with wholesome sounding names, will be able to use vast sums of concentrated money to further corrupt our political process. Without action, as a result of this activist Supreme Court decision, our electoral system will once again be at the mercy of large moneyed interests. The DISCLOSE Act will make a vast and substantial difference in protecting the integrity of our elections."

The DISCLOSE Act, which is the most far-reaching campaign finance reform since McCain-Feingold, will:

- Prevent government contractors from spending money on elections;
- Prevent corporate beneficiaries of TARP from spending money on elections;
- Prevent foreign nations, companies and individuals, or U.S. corporations controlled by foreign governments, from exerting influence on U.S. elections;
- Prevent campaign spenders from coordinating their activities with candidates and parties, thereby halting manipulation of elections by fly-by-night hit groups funded by corporations such as BP, special interests, foreign companies, and multimillionaires;
- Strengthen disclosure of electioneering communications, exposing Wall Street, Big Oil, insurance companies, and other special interest groups behind last minute attack ads and other election ads, and requiring their CEOs to stand by their ads;
- Enhance requirements for public disclosure of political expenditures by corporations, unions and non-profit organizations;
- Enhance disclaimers in ads, requiring sponsors and top donors to identify themselves and take responsibility for their ads;
- Require organizations that lobby to disclose political expenditures under the Lobbying Disclosure Act; and,
- Enhance requirements for disclosure of political expenditures to corporate shareholders and member of other organizations.

Below is Nadler's statement on the House floor, as prepared:

"Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5175, the Democracy is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections (DISCLOSE) Act.

"Back in 2002, I was proud to join many of my colleagues to reign in the influence of big money in politics by

supporting enactment of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. That law prohibited corporations and unions from making certain political communications in the period before an election.

"Earlier this year, a majority of the Supreme Court reversed years of precedent and struck down this historic reform law. It ruled that corporations are people just like you and me and have a corresponding constitutional right to pump as much money as they want into our elections.

"The very real danger now is that corporations, some with wholesome sounding names, will be able to use vast sums of concentrated money to further corrupt our political process. Without action, as a result of this activist Supreme Court decision, our electoral system will once again be at the mercy of large moneyed interests.

"This bill, H.R. 5175, takes several critical steps to reclaim our elections. It would:

- Prevent certain corporate government contractors from making independent expenditures or electioneering communications, preventing 'pay-to-play' schemes;
- Prohibit foreign corporations or domestic companies controlled by foreign entities from spending money to influence our elections;
- Require disclosure by corporations and labor unions of donors providing money for political purposes, in certain circumstances; and,
- Mandate that corporate CEOs appear in company political ads to say that they 'approve this message,' just as candidates must do.

"With these and other provisions, the DISCLOSE Act will constitutionally set some limits on the role of big money in politics, not by limiting the corporate money, but by requiring disclosure of the source of the corporate money and thus providing voters with valuable information on which wealthy interests are behind which political advertising so voters can better evaluate that advertising.

"I know there is a great deal of concern about one part of the legislation, which would exempt a category of organizations from the obligation to disclose their contributors. By limiting the exemption from this one requirement to include only those organizations which have been in existence for at least a decade, have at least one half of a million dues paying members, have dues paying members in each of the fifty states, and receive no more than fifteen percent of their funding from corporations and unions, the bill would still require disclosure from the kind of corporations who seek to buy elections secretly and with unlimited cash.

"We cannot allow the perfect to become the enemy of the good. The DISCLOSE Act would make a vast and substantial difference in protecting the integrity of our elections. I support its passage and encourage all Members to vote for it."